



Guide to harvesting and post-harvest handling of cashew nuts

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Country of first practice	Ghana
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Sustainable Development Goals	No poverty, decent work and economic growth and life on land

Summary

This practice give guidelines on how to harvest and store cashew nuts.

Description

Cashew nuts may be cultivated for both the nut and apple. The cashew tree comes into bearing 3 to 5 years after planting. In Ghana, mature cashew trees normally start flowering in late November to December. The fruit matures in 90 to 100 days after flowering. The ripe fruits normally start to drop in late January. The peak fruit collection period is between February and March, with a few late maturing trees dropping their fruits in April.

It is important to remember that the excellence and thoroughness of post-harvest handling affects the quality of the product, which in turn affects the country's reputation for those products. Product quality influences the demand for those products on the whole market, which in turn positively affects the price.

1. Before harvesting

It is important to weed the area under the trees clean, ahead of harvesting. This will facilitate the picking of fruits (apples and nuts).

2. Nut harvesting

1. Allow fruits to drop to the ground before picking.
2. In the southern parts of Ghana, collect fruits at least every three days. In hotter areas (i.e. Northern parts) of the country collect fruits daily. Leaving the nuts uncollected on hotter days lowers the quality.

3. Handling of nuts

1. Neatly detach the apple completely from the nut, using a nylon thread or sharp knife. The quality of the nut is affected when the apple is not neatly detached from the nut.
2. Air-dry collected nuts on concrete floors, drying mats or tarpaulins under shade for 3 to 4 days.
3. Turn nuts frequently during the drying period to ensure uniform drying.
4. Avoid drying indoors, or on metallic surfaces or directly in scorching sun since the quality of the nuts will deteriorate. Well-dried nuts produce a rattling sound when turned on the drying floor.
5. Remove and discard immature, diseased, shrivelled and damaged nuts along with any foreign matter when drying.



Post-harvest and Marketing

4. Storage of nuts

1. Store well-dried nuts in jute sacks, (no plastic or fertilizer sacks containers like boxes, buckets, etc).
2. Stitch jute sacks tightly to avoid spillage.
3. Place the jute sacks on wooden pallets in a dry, well-ventilated leak proof room.
4. Leave a clearance of at least 0.5 m between the packed jute sacks and the roof as well as between sacks and walls of the storage room to allow air to circulate freely.
5. Sell nuts within the same year of harvest to prevent loss in quantity.

5. Validation of the practice

This practice has been applied in Ghana.

6. Agro-ecological zones

- Tropics, warm

7. Related/Associated Technologies

- 7461

8. Objectives fulfilled by the project

8.1 Women-friendly

Women can participate in the post-harvesting process.